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Professor Holden, who had been appointed director of the observatory, was then president of the University of California. On my invitation he visited the observatory in order to inspect the instrument before I left for the East, and I shall never forget the look of wonder and surprise as he entered the dome and saw before him for the first time the great instrument. The mechanism of the finder not having been adjusted, I stepped upon the tube of the telescope to remove the finder cap. Professor Holden sang out to me—"Is that what you do, walk on a telescope that way?" "Yes," I said, "I have seen a dozen men on this tube at one time." He did not realize that the great instrument before him, of which he was about to take charge, had not only an objective which was the most powerful light gatherer ever made, but that from an engineering standpoint it was the most powerful instrument ever constructed.

Very respectfully,
(signed) AMBROSE SWASEY.

THE FOCAL LENGTH OF THE 36-INCH REFRACTOR

In Dr. Swasey's interesting note, which precedes, the focal length of the 36-inch Lick refractor is given as approximately 56 feet. Evidently this value, which is stated in the first published description of the instrument¹ as 674 inches (56 feet 2 inches), refers to the length of the large tube of the telescope, since the focal length of the 36-inch lens for the visual rays, determined in the usual way from micrometric measures, is 694 inches² (57 feet 10 inches). It seems worth while to call attention to these facts as the erroneous value has been quoted in various places, especially in Young's *General Astronomy*.

J. H. MOORE.

NOTE ON COMET *d* 1918 (SCHORR)

The fourth comet of 1918 was discovered by R. Schorr, director of the observatory at Bergedorf, near Hamburg. It was found on November 23rd, but the cabled announcement, thru Copenhagen, did not reach American astronomers till the 29th.

On the evening of the 29th, an observation was secured by Burton at the Naval Observatory, Washington. On the next

¹*Publ. Lick Obs.*, **1**, 61, 1887.

²*Ibid.*, **3**, 1, 1894.

night it was observed by Burton again, and also by Barnard at the Yerkes Observatory and by Aitken at the Lick Observatory. Several more observations were secured during the early part of December.

As usual, the elements of the orbit of the comet were determined at the Berkeley Astronomical Department. The first orbit was based on the first three observations received. The second orbit, based upon a longer arc, and with observations better distributed, was published in *Lick Observatory Bulletin* Number 320. The two sets of elements are quite similar—they agree in making the orbit elliptical, with a period of about six years. So far this comet has not been identified with any of the previously known comets; it appears to be a new member of the already numerous family of comets belonging to *Jupiter*.

According to the last elements, the comet passed perihelion on October 16th. The distance from the Sun at that time was about 180,000,000 miles. At discovery it was about 95,000,000 miles from the Earth. The distance from both the Earth and the Sun is now increasing, and the theoretical brightness, for that reason, is diminishing. The elements, beyond the elliptic character, with an unusually small eccentricity, have no points of special interest.

An estimate of the brightness was made by Barnard in the early part of December. The magnitude, on the stellar scale, was sixteen, or perhaps a trifle brighter. The comet is therefore visible only in large telescopes. Before many weeks it will be entirely beyond the range of visual observation.

H. M. JEFFERS.

Berkeley Astronomical Department,
January 15, 1919.